

# Early Childhood Education Report

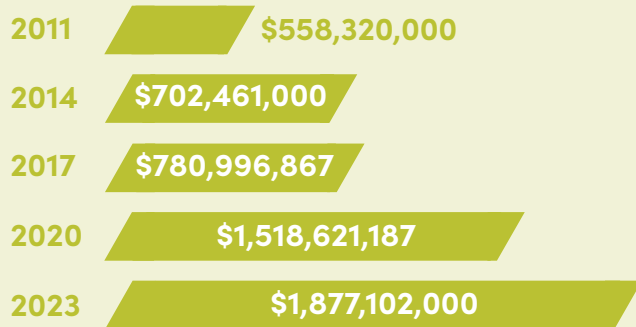


# BRITISH COLUMBIA

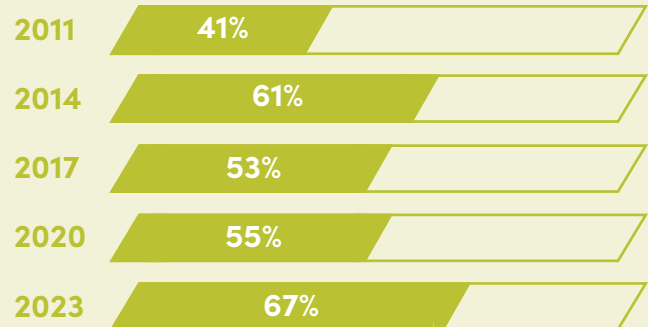
## Profile 2023



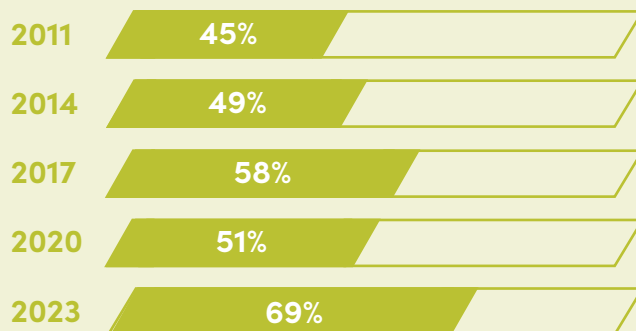
### CHANGE IN ECEC SPENDING



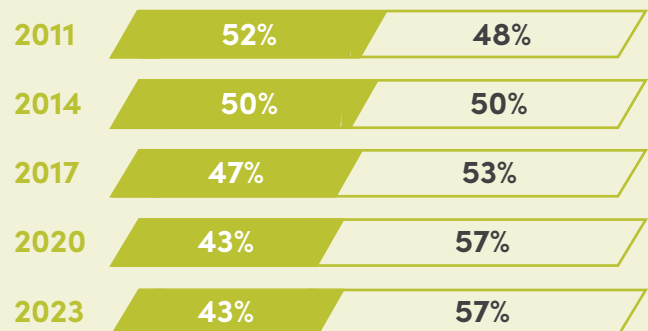
### ECEC CAPACITY TO PERCENTAGE OF 2- TO 4-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN



### ECE WAGES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TEACHER WAGES



### PERCENTAGE OF ECE FACILITIES (NON-PROFIT/PROFIT)





## Early Childhood Education Report



## ABOUT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION REPORT BENCHMARKS

The Early Childhood Education Report (ECER) is produced by the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto and the Abilio – Childhood Knowledge Dissemination Centre, formerly the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development, at the Université Laval and Université de Montréal. Twenty-one benchmarks are organized into five equally weighted categories, totalling a score of 15. The benchmarks evaluate governance structures, funding levels, access, quality in early learning environments, and the rigour of accountability mechanisms. Results are populated from detailed provincial and territorial profiles developed by the researchers and reviewed by provincial and territorial officials. For the federal overview, a detailed look at the benchmarks, the full methodology, and all provincial and territorial profiles, please visit [ECEReport.ca](https://ecereport.ca).

### **Please cite this publication as:**

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## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

This British Columbia profile captures early learning and child care initiatives to March 31, 2023. The New Developments section highlights activities occurring after this date.

Starting in September 2023, the Child Care Fee Reduction was expanded to include children enrolled in licensed preschools and children in Grade 1 to age 12. Families at participating licensed preschools and school-age child care facilities receive fee reductions of up to \$145 per month per child.<sup>1</sup>

The province's new *StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan*, May 2, 2023,<sup>2</sup> includes increasing early childhood education spaces in the province by 50 per cent, and opening 1,300 new training opportunities for early childhood educators.

Future skills grants of up to \$3,500 for training costs became available starting in September 2023.<sup>3</sup>

\$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres deliver low-cost child care while testing operating funding models as the province moves towards making child care a core service. As of Spring 2024, over 15,000 spaces have transitioned to \$10 a day, and the province is on track to transition a total of 20,000 spaces by Spring 2026.

Seamless Day Kindergarten is a pilot project that integrates before- and after-school care into the Kindergarten classroom, delivered by certified early childhood educators who work alongside the classroom teacher. On May 15, 2023, the pilot received \$4.1 million to support the program in 45 schools.<sup>4</sup>

Announced on May 2, 2023, Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) will receive \$9 million through the 2021–22 to 2025–26 Canada–British Columbia Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. This funding will allow for the creation of approximately 100 new culturally relevant child care spaces for Métis children.<sup>5</sup>

### CANADA-BRITISH COLUMBIA CANADA WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE AGREEMENT (CWELCC)

On July 7, 2021, Canada and British Columbia signed a five-year CWELCC agreement for \$2.9 billion over five years.<sup>6</sup>

Funding under the CWELCC agreement will be used to:

- Work towards reducing parent fees to an average of \$10 a day by 2025–26 through several initiatives.
- Create 30,000 new regulated spaces for children under age 6 by fiscal year 2025 to 2026; and create 40,000 new regulated spaces for children under age 6 by fiscal year 2027 to 2028.
- Increase funding to the Supported Child Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development programs.
- Develop and implement a provincial wage grid for early childhood educators.
- Support the recruitment and retention of the early childhood workforce.

# GOVERNANCE

**TABLE 1.1 BRITISH COLUMBIA GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

Lead Ministries	Ministry of Education and Child Care
Related Ministries	Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills Ministry of Health
Policy Framework	<i>Child Care BC Caring For Kids, Lifting up Families: The Path to Universal Child Care</i> (February 2018) <sup>a</sup> <i>The Early Childhood Educators Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy</i> (September 2018) <sup>b</sup>
Common ECE Supervisory Unit	n/a
Legislation	<i>Child Care Act</i> <sup>c</sup> <i>Community Care and Assisted Living Act</i> <sup>d</sup> <i>Child Care Licensing Regulation</i> <sup>e</sup> (Includes amendments B.C. Reg. 118/2020, June 1, 2020) <i>Child Care Subsidy Act</i> <sup>f</sup> (Last amended September 13, 2021 by B.C. Reg. 228/2021) <i>School Act</i> [RSBC 1996] c.412. <sup>g</sup> <i>Teachers Act</i> [SBC 2011] <sup>h</sup> and related regulations <sup>i</sup> <i>Independent School Act</i> [RSBC 1996] <sup>j</sup> and related regulations <sup>k</sup> <i>First Nations Education Act</i> (2007) <sup>l</sup>
Related Legislation	n/a
Local Service Delivery	Kindergarten, StrongStart BC, Seamless Day Kindergarten, Ready Set Learn: 60 school districts including the Conseil scolaire francophone, plus independent schools (for Kindergarten only) <sup>m</sup> Licensed child care: Independent providers licensed through 5 Regional Health Authorities <sup>n</sup>
Community/Sector Oversight	The Provincial Child Care Council <sup>o</sup> School Planning Council <sup>p</sup>

<sup>a</sup> British Columbia. *Child Care B.C. Caring For Kids, Lifting up Families: The Path to Universal Child Care* (February 2018). Retrieved from: [https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2018/childcare/2018\\_Child\\_Care\\_BC.pdf](https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2018/childcare/2018_Child_Care_BC.pdf)

<sup>b</sup> British Columbia. *Investing in our Early Childhood Educators: Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy*. Retrieved from: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/child-care/6337\\_earlycareandlearningrecruitment\\_andretentionstrategy\\_report\\_web.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/child-care/6337_earlycareandlearningrecruitment_andretentionstrategy_report_web.pdf)

<sup>c</sup> Kings Printer. *Child Care BC Act*. Retrieved from: [https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/01004\\_01](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/01004_01)

<sup>d</sup> Kings Printer. *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*. Retrieved from: [https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00\\_96046\\_01#section5](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_96046_01#section5)

<sup>e</sup> Kings Printer. *Child Care Licensing Regulation*. Retrieved from: [https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/332\\_2007](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/332_2007)

<sup>f</sup> Kings Printer. *Child Care Subsidy Act*. Retrieved from: [https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/01004\\_01](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/01004_01)

<sup>g</sup> Kings Printer. *School Act*. Retrieved from: [https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96412\\_02](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96412_02)

<sup>h</sup> Kings Printer. *Teachers Act*. Retrieved from: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/teachers\\_act\\_contents.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/teachers_act_contents.pdf)

<sup>i</sup> Kings Printer. *Teachers Act Related Regulations*. Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/manual-of-school-law/teachers-act-related-regulations>

<sup>j</sup> Kings Printer. *Independent School Act*. Retrieved from: [https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96216\\_01](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96216_01)

<sup>k</sup> Kings Printer. *Independent School Act and Related Regulations*. Retrieved from: [https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/262\\_89](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/262_89)

<sup>l</sup> Kings Printer. *First Nations Education Act*. Retrieved from: [https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00\\_07040\\_01](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_07040_01)

<sup>m</sup> British Columbia. *School District Boundaries*. Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/geographic-data-services/land-use/administrative-boundaries/school-district>

<sup>n</sup> British Columbia. *Regional Health Authorities*. Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/partners/health-authorities/regional-health-authorities>

<sup>o</sup> British Columbia. *Provincial Child Care Council*. Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/childcarebc-engagement/provincial-child-care-council>

<sup>p</sup> Kings Printer. *School Planning Council*. Retrieved from: [https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/consol15/consol15/96412\\_02#section8.1](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/consol15/consol15/96412_02#section8.1)



## DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

In 2022, provincial oversight of licensed child care and preschool programs moved from the Ministry of Children and Family Development into the newly created Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC).<sup>7</sup>

The ministry is responsible for the development and administration of legislation, regulations, policies, and guidelines pertaining to child care programs and services. The MECC also administers the ECE Registry, which is responsible for the certification of ECEs and ECE assistants, the investigation of practice concerns, and the recognition of ECE education programs at post-secondary institutions.

As part of this transition, school districts were given the option to secure funding for a District Early Learning and Child Care Lead position. The ELCC leads support and promote early learning and child care initiatives within their respective districts. Schools, districts, and their partners are supported to offer child care on school grounds.<sup>8</sup>

The Minister of State for Child Care is responsible for initiatives that support the government's universal child care plan.<sup>9</sup> The minister monitors and reports on results achieved through early learning and child care agreements with the federal government and consults with stakeholders to further inform the plan for universal child care.

The MECC also establishes standards and policy directions for the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education.<sup>10</sup> MECC supports early learning in school districts by setting policies and providing funding including for full-day Kindergarten, StrongStart BC Early Learning Programs, the Ready, Set, Learn program, and Kindergarten transition supports.

Teacher certification requirements are set by the BC Teachers' Council, and teacher certification is administered by the Teacher Certification Branch of the MECC.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) is responsible for the provincial health and safety legislation, which governs licensed child care. Local medical health officers are responsible for issuing licences and carrying out routine inspections of child care, and investigating complaints about unlicensed child care.<sup>11</sup>

## POLICY FRAMEWORKS

*Child Care B.C. Caring For Kids, Lifting up Families: The Path to Universal Child Care (February 2018)* outlines a 10-year plan to expand and improve child care services.<sup>12</sup>

The *Early Childhood Educators Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy (September 2018)*<sup>13</sup> is designed to retain and build the early care and learning workforce through enhanced wages, expanded post-secondary education programs, bursaries to offset education-related expenses, and expanded professional development opportunities.

## SERVICE DESIGN

### EDUCATION PROGRAMS

**FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN** is available for children who are 5 years old by December 31. All public and some independent schools provide Kindergarten programs.<sup>14</sup> Kindergarten is optional in B.C. but nearly all children attend.

**SEAMLESS DAY KINDERGARTEN**<sup>15</sup> is a pilot program that integrates before- and after-school regulated child care into the Kindergarten classroom. The program is delivered by certified early childhood educators (ECE) who work alongside the classroom teacher. It uses available school space and facilities outside of school hours. The Seamless Day Kindergarten pilot operates in 45 elementary schools.

**JUSTB4** is a pilot program providing half-day preschool for 3 and 4 year old children in conjunction with StrongStart BC. The JustB4 pilot operates in 31 elementary schools.



**STRONGSTART BC**<sup>16</sup> operates 329 programs across all but one of the 60 school districts, providing early learning activities for adults and their young children to 5 years of age. Most programs operate five days per week, for a minimum of three hours per day.

**READY, SET, LEARN**<sup>17</sup> enables schools to provide supports for children and families to make smooth transitions to Kindergarten.

## REGULATED CHILD CARE

There are two types of child care in B.C.: licensed and licence-not-required.<sup>18</sup>

Licensed child care applies to centre-based and family child care programs caring for three or more children. Programs must meet specific requirements for health and safety, staffing qualifications, space and equipment, staff to child ratios, and program standards. Licensed programs are monitored and inspected by regional health authority Community Care Facility Licensing programs.

The Child Care Licensing Regulation<sup>19</sup> specifies the following categories of child care (based on age of children, location, and number of children) that require licensing:

**GROUP CHILD CARE:** Care for children aged 36 months and younger.

**GROUP CHILD CARE:** Care for children aged 30 months to Kindergarten entry.

**PRESCHOOL:** Part-time care for children aged 30 months to Kindergarten entry.

**GROUP CHILD CARE (SCHOOL AGE):** Care outside of school hours and during holidays for school-aged children, including children attending Kindergarten.

**MULTI-AGE CHILD CARE:** Groups of eight children up to and including 12 years of age.

**FAMILY CHILD CARE:** Care in a personal residence for no more than more than seven children under 12 years of age, including the provider's own children aged 12 years and younger.

**IN-HOME MULTI-AGED CHILD CARE:** Care in a personal residence by a certified ECE for no more than eight children under 12 years of age, including the provider's own children aged 12 years and younger.

**OCCASIONAL CHILD CARE:** Short-term care for children at least 18 months of age, for no more than eight hours/day for each child and no more than 40 hours in a calendar month for each child. Enrolment numbers may vary depending on ages of children attending.

**CHILD-MINDING:** Short-term care for children up to and including 12 years of age for no more than five hours/day where parents are on site attending programs/services (e.g., English as a Second Language, settlement, or labour market integration).

## UNREGULATED CHILD CARE<sup>20</sup>

**REGISTERED LICENCE-NOT-REQUIRED CARE (RLNR):** Providers must register with a Child Care Resource and Referral Centre, undergo criminal record checks, provide references, undergo a safety home-setting review, and complete first aid certification. Registered care providers have access to support, training, and resources. No more than two children or a sibling group who are not related to the provider are permitted.

**LICENSE-NOT-REQUIRED CARE (LNR):** Providers are not monitored or inspected. Parents and guardians are responsible for overseeing the care of their child in these arrangements. No more than two children or a sibling group who are not related to the provider are permitted.

**IN-CHILD'S-OWN-HOME-CARE (ICH):** Caregivers are considered employees and parents assume employment responsibilities under B.C. employment standards requirements and make federal Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan payments on behalf of the caregiver and must meet Canada Revenue Agency income-tax requirements.



## CHILD/FAMILY SERVICES

### SUPPORTED CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:<sup>21</sup>

A variety of service providers across BC, including Indigenous organizations are contracted to provide early childhood intervention services for infants and young children who show signs of—or who are at risk of having—a developmental delay or disability.

### INFANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND ABORIGINAL INFANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:<sup>22</sup>

Provide home-based prevention and early intervention services. Consultants assist families in acquiring the tools, skills and community connections needed to promote optimal child development and support developmental challenges. The Aboriginal Infant Development Program includes activities and materials that reflect local Indigenous cultures, customs, beliefs and values.

### FAMILY RESOURCE PROGRAMS (FRP):<sup>23</sup>

Provide community-based services designed to strengthen parenting skills, promote family and community engagement, and provide stimulating environments for children.

### CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL CENTRES (CCRR):<sup>24</sup>

Support parents to find child care and offer training and supports to child care providers.

### ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL PROGRAM:<sup>25</sup>

Operated by the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, this program serves First Nations, Inuit, and Metis families and communities on reserve and in urban settings to increase parent access to high-quality child-care resources and services.

## ABORIGINAL SUPPORTED CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS:<sup>26</sup>

Community-based programs assist Indigenous families with children from birth to age 12 to access child care services meeting their extra support needs. Children aged 13 to 19 may receive service on an individual basis. Services are delivered within a cultural model, respecting traditional protocol, language, and traditions.

## LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY

### KINDERGARTEN AND STRONGSTART BC EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS:

Sixty school districts provide these programs, including the Conseil scolaire francophone, plus independent schools (Kindergarten only).

**LICENSED CHILD CARE:** Independent providers are licensed by five regional health authorities.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/OVERSIGHT

Every school has a school planning council (SPC)<sup>27</sup> with elected or appointed members. These include the school principal and teacher and parent representatives. SPCs are mandated to involve parents in developing and monitoring the annual school plan to improve student achievement in their school.

The Provincial Child Care Council (PCCC) advises and provides recommendations to the Minister of Education and Child Care and the Minister of State for Child Care. The council consists of between 14 and 21 members, appointed by the minister. Members are appointed geographically with representation from the child care, education, business, and nonprofit sectors, as well as First Nations, Métis, and urban Indigenous partners.<sup>28</sup>



# FUNDING

**TABLE 2.1 BRITISH COLUMBIA EXPENDITURES FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE TO MARCH 31, 2023**

Affordable Child Care	\$512,880,000
Accessible Child Care	\$116,439,000
Quality Child Care	\$125,158,000
Indigenous-led Child Care	\$15,808,000
Inclusive Child Care	\$70,470,000
Governance and Administration	\$45,129,000
<b>Total Provincial Funding<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>\$885,804,000</b>
Federal Funding through CWELCC Agreement <sup>b</sup>	\$538,651,000
Federal Funding through Bilateral Agreement <sup>b</sup>	\$70,093,000
<b>Total regulated child care funding</b>	<b>\$1,494,548,000</b>

<sup>a</sup> British Columbia. *Estimates, fiscal year ending March 31, 2023*. Retrieved from: [https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2023/pdf/2023\\_Estimates.pdf](https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2023/pdf/2023_Estimates.pdf)

<sup>b</sup> Government of Canada. *Canada-British Columbia Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement*. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories/british-columbia-canada-wide-2021.html>

**TABLE 2.1A FEDERAL FUNDING FOR EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMS TO MARCH 31, 2023 (CWELCC)**

Affordable Child Care	\$104,770,000
Accessible Child Care	\$180,250,000
Indigenous-led Child Care	\$41,500,000
Inclusive Child Care	\$15,000,000
Administration	\$53,090,000
Deferred Federal Allocation	\$197,131,000
<b>Total Federal CWELCC Allocation</b>	<b>\$538,651,000</b>

**TABLE 2.1B FEDERAL FUNDING FOR EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMS TO MARCH 31, 2023 (CANADA BILATERAL)**

Affordable Child Care	\$32,700,000
Indigenous-led Child Care	\$10,000,000
Inclusive Child Care	\$26,800,000
Deferred Federal Allocation	\$593,000
<b>Total Federal Bilateral Allocation</b>	<b>\$70,093,000</b>



**TABLE 2.2 BRITISH COLUMBIA EXPENDITURES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION/CHILD CARE TO MARCH 31, 2023**

Spending on Early Childhood Education <sup>a</sup>	\$382,554,000
Spending on regulated child care (Table 2.1)	\$1,494,548,000
<b>Total ECEC spending<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>\$1,877,102,000</b>
Total budget spending estimates <sup>c</sup>	\$73,013,000,000
<b>ECEC as a % of provincial budget</b>	<b>2.5%</b>

<sup>a</sup> Includes funding for Kindergarten, StrongStart BC, and Ready, Set, Learn programs.

<sup>b</sup> Funding for First Nations child care is provided by the federal and provincial governments.

<sup>c</sup> Government of British Columbia. *Estimates, Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2023*. Retrieved from: [https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2023/pdf/2023\\_Estimates.pdf](https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2023/pdf/2023_Estimates.pdf)

## REGULATED CHILD CARE FUNDING PROGRAMS

In addition to CWELCC funding, BC’s investment in early learning and child care is guided through its Childcare Plan (2018).<sup>29</sup>

**CHILD CARE OPERATING FUNDING:** Supports licensed group and family child care providers with the day-to-day costs of running a child care facility.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR WAGE ENHANCEMENT (ECE-WE):** Provides \$4 per hour to enhance the wages of ECEs who hold active certification issued by the BC ECE Registry and are working in licensed child care facilities (effective September 1, 2021). Additional funding for statutory benefits is also provided.<sup>30</sup>

**CHILD CARE FEE REDUCTION INITIATIVE (CCFRI):** Offers funding to licensed providers to reduce parents’ child care fees by up to \$900 (per month per child) and provides operators with up to \$96 (per month per child) to help with the costs of running a child care facility. As of September 2023, this initiative is also available for part-day preschool or school age programs.

**AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE BENEFIT:** Provides up to \$1,250 (per month per child) to reduce the costs of care for eligible families. Amounts are determined by factors such as income, family size, and type of care.

**YOUNG PARENT PROGRAM:** Provides up to \$1,500 (per month per child) to help cover the cost of care for the children of parents under the age of 25 who are finishing high school.

**ABORIGINAL HEAD START:** Provides no-fee, licensed child care spaces for Indigenous families.

Additional funding is available through:

**CHILDCAREBC NEW SPACE FUND:** Offers funding to build or renovate to add new spaces. The program is focused on areas with the greatest need and aligned with provincial priorities and commitments under the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.<sup>31</sup>

**START-UP GRANTS:** Supports unlicensed child care providers to meet the standards to obtain a licence to operate family or in-home multi-age (IMHA) child care.

**CHILDCAREBC MAINTENANCE FUND:** Helps licensed child care facilities in emergency circumstances to address necessary repairs or replace eligible items.

**FIRST NATIONS EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE GRANT:** Offers a one-time minimum grant of \$73,500 to First Nations communities to assist with their early learning and child care priorities.<sup>32</sup>

# ACCESS

**TABLE 3.1 BRITISH COLUMBIA CHILD POPULATION 0 TO <6 YEARS (2022)**

Child population 0 to <6 years	271,569
0 to <24 months	86,314
24 months to <5 years	136,587
5 years	48,668
Total population of British Columbia	5,319,324
Children 0 to <6 years as % of total population	5.1%

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0005-01 Population estimates July 1st, 2022, by age and sex (accessed on January 10, 2023).

**TABLE 3.2 BRITISH COLUMBIA LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION OF MOTHER BY AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD (2022)**

	Number of mothers in labour force by age of youngest child	Labour force participation rate of mothers by age of youngest child
0 to <24 months	45,700	70%
24 months to <5 years	63,700	73.9%
5 years	17,400	80.5%
Total mothers in labour force with child 0 to <6 years	126,800	
Average labour force participation of mothers with youngest child 0 to 5 years		73.2%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey. 0620\_13 Table 3—Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates of mothers by age of youngest child, Canada, provinces, territories, annual average, 2022.

**TABLE 3.3 BRITISH COLUMBIA ECE SCHOOL PROGRAMS (2022–23)**

Kindergarten	
5-year-old child population	48,668
Attendance in 5-year-old Kindergarten <sup>a</sup>	46,241
% of children attending Kindergarten	99%
JustB4 licensed preschool spaces <sup>b</sup>	Approximately 300
StrongStart BC <sup>b</sup>	25,652

<sup>a</sup> Student Headcount by Grade 2017/18 to 2020-2022/23. Retrieved from: [https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/7114187e-305c-4a79-acbb-3294ba0f53c8/resource/c1a55945-8554-4058-9019-514b16178f89/download/student\\_headcount\\_by\\_grade\\_2017\\_18-to-2022\\_23.xlsx](https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/7114187e-305c-4a79-acbb-3294ba0f53c8/resource/c1a55945-8554-4058-9019-514b16178f89/download/student_headcount_by_grade_2017_18-to-2022_23.xlsx)

Includes 39,763 students enrolled in public, and 6,478 in independent schools.

<sup>b</sup> StrongStart BC and JustB4 enrolment estimates. Personal communication, Ministry of Education, October 1, 2023.

**TABLE 3.4 BRITISH COLUMBIA REGULATED CHILD CARE TO MARCH 2023**

<b>Spaces by age group in centre-based programs</b>	
Infants (0 to <36 months)	18,575
36 months to Kindergarten/preschool	62,072
School age (Grades 1 to 12 years old)	42,299
Multi-age	3,950
<b>Total capacity regulated child care centres</b>	<b>126,895</b>
Spaces family child care homes	12,350
<b>Total capacity regulated child care</b>	<b>139,245</b>
Total facilities	3,560
<b>Facilities by auspice</b>	
Not-for-profit	1,517
For-profit	2,043

Source: Child Care Operating Funding and \$10 a Day ChildCareBC systems. Provided by the Child Care Modelling and Analysis team, Ministry of Education and Child Care.

Notes: Data as of 1 Aug 2023; data is monthly average for 2022-23 full fiscal year. The British Columbia government licenses First Nations child care programs. First Nations child care programs are required to adhere to the provincial standards and regulations.

**TABLE 3.5 BRITISH COLUMBIA ECEC CAPACITY TO PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN BY AGE GROUP TO MARCH 31, 2023**

Child Ages	Number of Children <sup>a</sup>	Child Care <sup>b,d</sup>	Kindergarten/ Pre-Kindergarten Enrolment	Other ECE Programs <sup>c</sup>	Capacity to % of children
0 to <24 months	86,314	12,383			14.3%
24 months to <5 years	136,587	69,264		22,300	<b>67%</b>
5 years	48,668		46,412		99%

<sup>a</sup> Statistics Canada. Population Estimates January 20, 2023 Table 17-10-0005-01.

<sup>b</sup> To avoid double counting, it is assumed that 5-year-old children in child care also attend Kindergarten.

<sup>c</sup> Includes estimate of children 24 months to <5 years attending Strong Start BC, JustB4 and Aboriginal Head Start programs.

<sup>d</sup> Child Care Operating Funding and \$10 a Day ChildCareBC systems. Derived from data provided by the Child Care Modelling and Analysis team, Ministry of Education and Child Care. Data as of 1 Aug 2023; data is monthly average for full fiscal year 2022-23.

## AFFORDABILITY

Various programs aim to reduce child care costs for families using regulated child care.

The *Affordable Child Care Benefit*<sup>33</sup> is a monthly payment that assists eligible families with the cost of child care. Families may be eligible for a full or partial subsidy depending on their income, and factors such as family size, age of children, and type of child care used.

Families who have a child with extra support needs may be eligible for a *Special Needs Supplement* of \$150 per month.<sup>34</sup>

The *Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI)*<sup>35</sup> enhances child care affordability by offering funding to eligible, licensed child care providers to reduce parents' monthly child care fees. Approved licensed providers receive the following monthly amounts for full-time care, which they must use to reduce parent fees:

- \$900/month for group infant/toddler care (under 36 months)

- \$600/month for family infant/toddler care (under 36 months)
- \$545/month for group care for children aged 3 to Kindergarten
- \$500/month for family care for children aged 3 to Kindergarten
- \$320/month for group and family care for children in Kindergarten

Starting September 2023, part-time preschool and school-age care became eligible for the CCFRI:

- \$95/month for preschool care
- \$115/month for group care for children aged Grade 1 to age 12
- \$145/month for family and in-home multi-age for children aged Grade 1 to age 12

Since April 1, 2021, facilities applying to CCFRI are required to set their parent fees in line with local providers delivering the same type of care.

## INCLUSION

The *Inclusive Child Care Toolkit* (2021) is a resource intended to support quality, inclusive practices in child care settings. The Toolkit encourages reflective practice and provides guidance on developing an inclusion policy. Additional resources and professional learning opportunities are available for child care providers to support the provision inclusive, culturally safe child care.<sup>36</sup>

*Special needs support in Kindergarten: Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines* (April 2016) outlines children's right to equitable access to learning and opportunities for achievement.<sup>37</sup>

Supported Child Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development are community-based programs that offer a range of consulting and support services to children, families, and child care centres to help children with support needs to fully participate in child care programs. The Aboriginal Supported Child Development program provides supports in a culturally relevant and meaningful way.<sup>38</sup>



# LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

**TABLE 4.1 BRITISH COLUMBIA CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS**

Program	Framework Document
Kindergarten	<i>BC's Redesigned Curriculum</i> <sup>a</sup>
Early years programs	<i>The BC Early Learning Framework</i> (updated 2019) <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> BC's *Redesigned Curriculum*. (September 2018). Retrieved from: <https://newwestschools.ca/about-us/learner-success/bcs-redesignedcurriculum/>

<sup>b</sup> *BC Early Learning Framework* (updated 2019). Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/early-learning-framework>

*BC's Redesigned Curriculum* is organized around three core competencies: thinking, personal and social, and communication. Teachers have flexibility to personalize learning and create engaging environments.

The *British Columbia Early Learning Framework* includes children from infancy to 8 years of age. It shares philosophies with the *B.C. Education Curriculum Core Competencies*. Its use is mandatory in StrongStart BC and district operated child care programs.

*Introducing the BC Early Learning Framework* is an online course designed to help educators in programs for children from birth to age 8 years.<sup>39</sup>

## WORK ENVIRONMENT

Kindergarten class size: Class sizes may not exceed 20 students.<sup>40</sup> The 2021–22 average class size was 18.1.<sup>41</sup>



**TABLE 4.2 BRITISH COLUMBIA GROUP SIZE, STAFF/CHILD RATIO AND EDUCATOR QUALIFICATONS IN REGULATED CHILD CARE CENTRES**

Program	Maximum group size	Children per group	Ratio of staff to children each group
Group Child Care (0 to <36 months)	12, with a separate area designated for each group	≤4	1 Infant Toddler Educator (ITE)
		5–8	1 ITE and 1 Early Childhood Educator (ECE)
		9–12	1 ITE, 1 other ECE educator and 1 ECE Assistant
Group Child Care (30 months to school age)	25, with not more than 2 children younger than 36 months old in a single group	≤8	1 ECE
		9–6	1 ECE and 1 ECE Assistant
		17–25	1 ECE and 2 ECE Assistants
Preschool (30 months to school age)	20	≤10	1 ECE
		11–20	1 ECE and 1 ECE Assistant
Group Child Care (school age) if any preschool child or child in Grade 1 is present	24	≤12	1 Responsible Adult
		13–24	2 Responsible Adults
Group Child Care (school age) if no preschool child or child in Grade 1 is present	30	≤15	1 Responsible Adult
		16–30	2 Responsible Adults
Family Child Care, if any child younger than 12 months is present	7, having no more than 3 children younger than 48 months; of those 3, no more than one child younger than 12 months	≤7	The licensee (minimally a Responsible Adult)
Family Child Care, if no child younger than 12 months is present	7, having no more than 4 children younger than 48 months; of those 4, no more than 2 children younger than 24 months	≤7	The licensee (minimally a Responsible Adult)
Occasional Child Care, if any child present is younger than 36 months	16	≤4	1 Responsible Adult
		5–8	2 Responsible Adults
		9–12	3 Responsible Adults
		13–16	4 Responsible Adults
Occasional Child Care, if no child present is younger than 36 months	20	≤8	1 Responsible Adult
		9–16	2 Responsible Adults
		17–20	3 Responsible Adults

**TABLE 4.2 BRITISH COLUMBIA GROUP SIZE, STAFF/CHILD RATIO AND EDUCATOR QUALIFICATONS IN REGULATED CHILD CARE CENTRES (CONTINUED)**

Program	Maximum group size	Children per group	Ratio of employees to children each group
Multi-Age Child Care, if any child younger than 12 months is present	8, having no more than 3 children younger than 36 months; of those 3, no more than 1 child younger than 12 months	≤8	1 ECE
Multi-Age Child Care, if no child younger than 12 months is present	8, having no more than 3 children younger than 36 months	≤8	1 ECE
In-Home Multi-Age Child Care, if any child younger than 12 months is present	8, having no more than 3 children under 36 months; of those 3, no more than 1 child younger than 12 months old	≤8	The licensee, who must be certified as an ECE
In-Home Multi-Age Child Care, if no child younger than 12 months is present	8, having no more than 3 children younger than 36 months	≤8	The licensee, who must be certified as an ECE
Child-minding	24, with each child younger than 12 months counted as 2.5 children, each child younger than 36 months but 12 months or older counted as 2 children, and each child 36 months or older counted as 1 child	≤8	1 Responsible Adult
		9–17	2 Responsible Adults
		18–24	3 Responsible Adults

Source: *Community Care and Assisted Living Act: Child Care Licensing Regulation*. Retrieved from: [http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/332\\_2007#division\\_d2e3027](http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/332_2007#division_d2e3027). Responsible adults must be 19 years of age or older and able to provide care and mature guidance to children. Must also have 20 hours of child care-related training, relevant work experience, a valid first aid certificate and a clear criminal record check.





**TABLE 4.3 BRITISH COLUMBIA EDUCATOR QUALIFICATIONS**

Kindergarten Teachers <sup>a</sup>	Completion of a four-year program of post-secondary professional and academic or specialist studies, or equivalent, including an acceptable teacher education program.
Early Childhood Educators <sup>b</sup>	<p><b>Early Childhood Educator certificate:</b> ECE education program, with a minimum of 902 hours of post-secondary studies, including a minimum of 450 practicum hours; 500 hours of additional supervised work experience, with hours and competence validated by a supervising ECE; and character references.</p> <p><b>Special Needs Educator certificate:</b> Basic ECE certificate plus completion of a recognized Special Needs ECE education program.</p> <p><b>Infant and Toddler Educator certificate:</b> Basic ECE certificate plus completion of a recognized Infant and Toddler Educator education program.</p> <p><b>Early Childhood Educator Assistant certificate:</b> Character references plus one course in a recognized Basic ECE education program, in either health safety and nutrition, child guidance, or child development.</p>

<sup>a</sup> Government of British Columbia. BC Teacher's Council. *Certification Standards*. Retrieved from: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/organizational-structure/boards-commissions-tribunals/bc-teachers-council/cert\\_standards.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/organizational-structure/boards-commissions-tribunals/bc-teachers-council/cert_standards.pdf)

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**TABLE 4.4 BRITISH COLUMBIA PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION AND DEVELOPMENT**

	Teachers <sup>a</sup>	ECEs <sup>c</sup>
Professional Recognition	<p>The Teacher Certification Branch of the Ministry of Education and Child Care assesses applicants for certification, evaluates teacher education programs, issues teaching certificates, and enforces standards for certificate holders. A B.C. Professional Certificate of Qualification is required to teach in public schools.</p> <p>Certification requirements for independent school teachers are set by the Independent School Teaching Certificates Standards Committee under the <i>Independent School Act</i> and administered by the Teacher Certification Branch.</p>	<p>The Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Registry is mandated to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certify ECEs (including Infant Toddler Educators and Special Needs Educators) and ECE Assistants;</li> <li>• Investigate complaints regarding the competence and conduct of ECEs and ECE Assistants; and</li> <li>• Assess and recommend recognition of post-secondary ECE programs in B.C.</li> </ul>
Professional Development	Ongoing professional development is expected as a standard of practice. <sup>b</sup>	ECEs are required to complete 40 hours of professional development over the course of each five-year certificate term; ECE Assistants are required to complete one additional course of a recognized post-secondary ECE program. <sup>d</sup>

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<sup>d</sup> Early Childhood Educators of BC. *BC Early Years Professional Development Hub*. <https://www.ecebc.ca/professional-development/bc-early-years-professional-development-hub#:~:text=In%20British%20Columbia%2C%20certified%20Early,the%20hours%20of%20course%20completion>

**TABLE 4.5 BRITISH COLUMBIA DENSITY OF QUALIFIED STAFF IN CHILD CARE CENTRES**

For children <36 months: One ECE with an infant/toddler specialty plus one other ECE educator and one ECE Assistant for groups of 9–12 children.

One ECE and two ECE Assistants per group of 25 preschool-aged children in full-day child care, and one ECE and two ECE Assistants for a max group of 20 children in half-day preschool.

Source: *Community Care and Assisted Living Act: Child Care Licensing Regulation*. Retrieved from: [http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/332\\_2007#division\\_d2e3027](http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/332_2007#division_d2e3027)

**TABLE 4.6 BRITISH COLUMBIA ECE ANNUAL WAGE AS A PERCENTAGE OF TEACHER WAGE (2023)**

Teachers	Early Childhood Educators	ECE Wage as a Percentage of Teacher Wage
\$73,549 <sup>a</sup>	\$51,376 <sup>b</sup>	<b>69%</b>

- <sup>a</sup> Earnings for teachers at Category 5, Step 5 based on selection of current collective agreements. The requirement for this classification is five or more years of academic and professional studies. Retrieved from: <https://www.tqs.bc.ca/categories/requirements.pl>
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## ACCOUNTABILITY

**PROGRESS REPORTS:** *The Canada-British Columbia Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement—2021–2026* requires British Columbia to publicly report on results and expenditures for the previous fiscal year. The *Canada-British Columbia Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement: Report on Progress and Results Achieved in 2021/2022* is the most recent report.<sup>42</sup>

**PROGRAM STANDARDS:** Child Care Licensing Regulations govern child care facilities. Kindergarten classrooms must accommodate the delivery of BC's Redesigned Curriculum.

**POPULATION MONITORING:** The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is administered in Kindergarten classrooms on an annual or biannual basis (at the discretion of the school district). The Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) analyzes EDI results and supports communities in interpreting the findings. The most recent online reports are for 2019–22.<sup>43</sup>



## ENDNOTES

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